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"Interchange," A New System

By Mildred J. Loomis

A new way of exchanging goods without money is gaining ground in some quarters. It could be a help to the homestead movement.

This is not direct barter — exchange of goods for goods. But it is complex barter, in which the medium of exchange is a receipt instead of coin, check or paper-money.

The one credited with originating the idea is Noel Pratt, Rt. 1, Front Royal, Va. A couple of years ago he began saying to his friends, "Let's start doing business without money. I have something in surplus, like potatoes, apples, typing paper, mimeographing skill. You need some of this, so I give it to you. Instead of paying me money, you just sign a receipt that you have received it. Send me the receipt and I'll deposit it in what I call The Bank of Interchange. Then I'll announce your credit to others. Others can give things away, take receipts, deposit them in BIC. Soon we will get out a catalog listing what people want and what they have to give away. Then BIC is in business, and so are you, without any money. That's all there is to it."

Usable Goods

This method of doing away with cash interested me. Anything that is a step out of our exploitive money system looks good to me, so I "joined." When the catalog listing goods for exchange arrived, I found I had little need for the type of goods listed. Indeed I have very few material needs outside our own production. But when I came across a supplier of pecans, I immediately ordered 16 lbs. for \$5! They came—beautiful nuts from W. W. Wittkamper, Americus, Ga. All I did was sign a receipt, which Mr. Wittkamper sent to Bank of Interchange. Later I sent wheat to Walt Englebrecht

in Tennessee, etc. I have now built up some credit in BIC.

Branches Developing

Local and regional branches of a receipt-exchange have been developing independent from and aside from Noel Pratt's effort. Several reasons account for this. One is that members benefit from not having mail or

Comments, cont'd

In competition each must naturally use his attributes — brute physical strength and human intelligence. Subconsciously we all recognize this, and try to suppress in different ways, the more predatory aspects of combined fear and intelligence.

Regulating Personal Action

There are two methods of accomplishing this. One through regulatory measures by social legislation, and the other through individual useful accomplishment.

Europe has been characterized by dependence on social handling and legislation. We are aware of the disastrous results over the past century. . . . The history of the parts of the world in which men have channeled aggression into individual productive activity is quite a different story. One notes that in those areas of social altruism and control, warfare is a common way of releasing energies. In those societies honestly recognizing self-interest, energies are spent in competitive enterprise.

May I point out the American tendency over the past few decades to demand more social restraint on individual independence? — James E. Work, 41 Waverly Court, Framingham, Mass. 01701

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freight expense when they are close enough together to exchange goods directly. Another is that special emphases can be included or excluded as the members decide. Some people prefer that their exchange system be free of religious doctrine that accompanies Share, under the direction of Noel Pratt. Others prefer to exchange goods of a higher quality than seems to be the case in the original group of Interchangers.

As a useful and non-exploitive technique, members of School of Living are logically interested in this non-cash system of exchange. In our December 1964 A Way Out an item described the basic principles and underlying ideas. It has since been elaborated in the March and May issues, which are just recently in the mails. We are indebted to Miles Roberts of Rt. 2, Villisca, Iowa, for these articles. Mr. Roberts is a long-time friend of the School of Living, a consistent homesteader and developer of seed and nursery products.

Neighborliness

Basically, says Mr. Roberts, Interchange is only the well-known neighborliness where one person open-handedly supplies another out of surplus belongings. No money payment is asked and no debt is specifically incurred, yet Interchange is not merely a give-away proposition. Those who put things out freely do so in the expectation that they will, in the course of time, be remunerated for it by someone, somewhere in the Interchange system, in response to some need of their own. But an Interchanger can reach out many miles by means of his "Wanted at Interchange" sheet, and have his need supplied as freely as if it were by someone a house or farm or two away.

Benefit to Homesteaders

Mr. Roberts also says:

"I regard Interchange of special value to people of meager financial resources trying to find some escape from the modern complex by way of a return to the land. To make this break a family would need a different type of equipment around them for the simpler mode of living they were taking up. Much of this could be had from Interchange at small cost—that is, for receipt only plus delivery costs. Some of their own surplus belongings could be sent out in the same way, and to keep their own credit rating.

"A tremendous amount of good seed and nursery stock is produced by small operators (rarely salable locally), and numerous staple items of food could move through Interchange. Wheat and other grains, dried beans, etc., can be shipped long distances cheaply by freight. Perishable goods will have to wait for the time when there are local Interchange sectors. There are also loads of good usable (surplus) clothing, small tools, implements and household furnishings that would be available through Interchange, delivered

Magazine Delayed

In an effort to decentralize School of Living activities, A Way Out has been delayed, but we are hopeful of getting on schedule again.—M.J.L.

The Owner-Built Home, cont'd

day's revolution will occur when employment, including political, economic, and technical operations, shall become a means to the tender love, personal growth, and spontaneous artistry of settled home life.

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Note. This is the end of Volume III. Volume IV will begin next month.—Editor

A Man's Roots

"A man belongs where he has roots — where the landscape and milieu have some relation to his thoughts and feelings, by virtue of having formed them. A real civilization recognizes this fact—and the circumstances that America is beginning to forget it, does far more than does the mere matter of commonplace thought and bourgeois inhibitions to convince me that the general American fabric is becoming less and less a true civilization and more and more a vast, mechanical, and emotionally immature barbarism de luxe. . . . I cannot think of any individual as existing except as part of a pattern — and the pattern's most visible and tangible areas are of course the individual's immediate environment; the soil and culture-stream from which he springs, and the milieu of ideas, impressions, traditions, landscapes, and architecture, through which he must necessarily peer in order to reach the 'outside.'" — August Derleth in *Walden West*, page 65, Duell, Sloan and Pierce, New York.

economically.

"I believe there will not be a strong homesteading movement until a way is found whereby the financially impoverished can take it up. Membership in a fairly large group of Interchangers might clear the way for some. Two things are great roadblocks: the difficulty of finding land at low cost, and the low adaptability to rural life after years of city dwelling and reliance upon cash income. But we can find ways to help one another—if we want to bad enough."

Some Try Wilderness Homesteading

A trend among young people, disillusioned with "civilization," is to try out wilderness living. Reports have come in of several college "dropouts" going into the woods for primitive camp life. Some like it; others don't. But all testify that the experience is worthwhile.

Green Revolution has a good many readers in Canada, many of them having left the "States" to settle there in the years School of Living has been publishing. There are some at Argenta, B. C. (story in March '62 *Balanced Living*); others, including the Wise, Laux, and Freedman units, are at Farquhar, B. C. The Freedmans left college in 1959 and have since built three log cabins and developed two wilderness homesteads. Regular reports from them indicate complete absorption in their activities.

Bruce and Pam Beck, in New England, write as follows:

"In late April, 1964, Pam and I were at Joel Kent's forest home at Jamaica, Vt., doing a few odd jobs like sawing dead limbs off pine trees. He asked us to spade up a garden plot about 20 x 20. A slightly smaller area had been gardened two years before, but the fresh ground was full of quack grass.

"In one day I spaded up an area about 5 x 15, and broke up the clods with my hands by pulling and twisting on them, until a little clod only an inch or two in size was left. I found that this work on my knees was the most satisfying part of the job. Spading was a little tedious, but my hands in the soil with no spade in between was a contact with the elemental. The old garden soil had just occasional bunched

roots, which were handled in the same manner, but the quack roots of course were sorted out and removed from the garden. It should have been a good weed-free garden; we never learned because we left for British Columbia. My guess is that a heavy

mulch thereafter, plus mixing in of compost, would make turning of the soil for planting almost unnecessary.

"Last spring I was eager to go into a complete wilderness life, not realizing how nowadays one is pretty isolated from those similarly inclined. This is one big reason why we are planning to return to New Hampshire this summer, for a hand-labor, subsistence farm. Our temporary address will be c/o A. Harvey, Raymond, N. H.

California, cont'd

locally—even the lower amount needed for homesteading—is difficult.

Taxes

Both state and county governments in California have gone crazy on taxes. The rate here in Merced is about \$8 per \$100 of valuation. An acre of producing fruit trees may run \$30 taxes a year; hill land with no buildings will be taxed at \$1 an acre. A new three bedroom house selling at \$12,000 is assessed at 25% or \$3000. At \$8 per \$100 valuation this is \$240 a year or \$20 a month.

Alternatives

Why do we live here? The climate is good, we have a job, and we have not found a better alternative. Also, we have a good deal of freedom of choice in health matters, like exemption from compulsory vaccination. We would not consider living in one of the states which allow no exemptions (Ark., Ky., Md., Mass., N. H., N. Y., Pa., R. I., S. C., Va., and W. Va.). One might get an M. D. to forge a certificate but who wants to live under such a gestapo set-up? Will readers from these states please comment.

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FEN

Stagnant water it is called and so if we define our terms it be. But bending low one can somewhat see the multitudinous flit and skip and whirl the scurry of imperceptible legs flicking hurry. And one can sense trillion filaments rooted in the superficial slime or clinging to the edges, a botanical perfection, self-contained, self-reliant. A community of sunnied tenure nibblingly superior to waters running clearer.

—Chester D. Dawson

(Note: All poetry must be read very slowly, as one savors some tantalizing aroma. Not rhyme but cadence is the poet's desideratum. The "superior" with "clearer" is not poor rhyme, but rather assonance, a splendid and useful poetic device.)

Boylans Visit Sons Of Levi

Paul and Lela Boylan, of Shelbyville, Mich., are pioneers in the decentralist and health movements. Back in the 1940s they were charter members of Circle Pines, a cooperative recreational farm-camp near Delton, Mich. Some years ago they left their homestead there, and established a natural-food store near Shelbyville, and have helped the natural food activities and education develop in their state.

Interested in a religious-based community, they arrived at the Sons of Levi Community, near Mansfield, Mo., on May 6, and remained for nearly six weeks of learning and helping. Here a closely knit group lives and

works on 1760 acres of wooded and tilled land, called South Range Ranch, under the direction of Rev. Marl V. Kilgore, president of the community. (See Nov. and Dec. 1964 *Green Revolution*.)

When the Boylans arrived the community was in the beginnings of a spring cleaning and improvement program which included applying white siding to several outbuildings. In a letter of appreciation, Mr. Kilgore reports that the Boylans worked day after day applying this siding with the result that "the appearance continued to improve and now with all completed we have a much brighter and tidier looking community."

Other Activities

Mr. Boylan is a very enthusiastic photographer and took many rolls of film of the community and surrounding countryside. They also indulged their nature hobby, and enjoyed the birds and animals of the Ozark hills. Eddie Motter, a blind gymnast in the community, was able to participate in his enjoyment with other senses than sight.

The Boylans also enjoyed the freedom which allows each person their own particular views on philosophy and religion with the right to voice such opinions in the various meetings. Mr. Boylan testified that in his investigations of other communities he found this one to be temporally and spiritually harmonious, extending welcome to members, visitors and neighbors.

Appreciation for Mutual Aid

Rev. Kilgore expressed appreciation for the mutual aid and brotherly love that the Boylans conveyed. No complaints were heard. "Even the food (which they did not expect to find to their liking), they found tasty and agreeable. . . . We thank them for their love and help, and we extend to Green Revolutioners everywhere an invitation to stop by any time to visit and fellowship with us in peace."

(advertisement)

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